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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [POL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: MUTHANNA SHEIKH SAYS TRIBAL SUPPORT COUNCILS  
OPERATE WITHOUT PROVINCIAL COUNCIL SUPPORT

Classified By: Muthanna PRT Leader Bradley Lynch for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) This is a Muthanna PRT reporting cable

12. (C) SUMMARY: PRT Team Leader met with Sheikh Abu Chefat to discuss current political issues in Muthanna, including Tribal Support Council (SC) activities in the province. Chefat stated that despite the lack of Provincial Council (PC) support, SCs in Muthanna meet regularly and cooperate with the Iraqi Army (IA) on security matters. According to Chefat, the tribes and SCs prefer to work with the IA because it is viewed as apolitical, while the Iraqi Police (IP) are thought to be closely aligned with political parties. Chefat also delivered a letter addressed to POTUS reminding him of his promise to include tribal leaders in Iraq's governing process. END SUMMARY.

13. (SBU) Muthanna PRT Leader met Sheikh Abu Chefat at Tallil Air Base to discuss current political issues. Chefat reaffirmed his support for the Security Agreement, pointing out that he had been in favor of it from the beginning. He apologized for the shoes thrown at POTUS in Baghdad, and he shared some interesting information regarding tribal support council activity in this province.

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NO PC SUPPORT FOR SCs  
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14. (C) According to Chefat, there is no provincial council (PC) support in Muthanna for SCs. He expects that SCs will have to wait until after the provincial elections to achieve closer relations with the Provincial Council. He believes that PC members see the SCs as watchdog organizations that will hold PC members accountable for their actions, which they do not want. This has not deterred the SCs, who are meeting regularly, forming committees, and cooperating with the IA on security matters. Chefat informed us that the SCs have chosen to work with the IA because they feel that the IP is too closely aligned with political parties. Chefat listed anti-terrorism, anti-drugs, and combating foreign influence as the primary focus of IA-SC interaction. He proudly proclaimed, "Don't worry about security here; the SCs have it under control. We have eyes everywhere."

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"FRIENDSHIP COUNCIL" SUGGESTED  
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15. (SBU) Chefat welcomed the prospect of a new PRT office at Eastern Barracks near the provincial capital, Samawah. He thought that a USG presence inside the province would strengthen our relationship with the people of Muthanna. To help reach that goal, Chefat suggested that the PRT form a "Friendship Council" incorporating tribal leaders, university professors, and young people. He views this as an opportunity to reach out to people without subverting the PRT's relationship with the elected government.

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POTUS PROMISE  
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16. (SBU) Chefat opened the meeting by delivering a personal letter addressed to President Bush reminding him of his promise to include tribal leaders in Iraq's governing process. He claims that this commitment was made during his visit to the White House earlier this year.

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